Sunnahs Neglected in Ramadaan

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Question: "Could the Shaikh give us some words of benefit for the blessed month of Ramadaan, on this fine occasion"

Shaikh al-Albaanee, may Allaah have mercy upon him, said,

"Allaah, the Exalted and Most High, says in the Noble Quraan:

﴿ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ كُتِبَ عَلَيۡكُمُ ٱلصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبۡلِكُمۡ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تَتَّقُونَ ١٨٣ ﴾

Meaning: 'O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may become people having Taqwaa.' [Sooratul-Baqarah (2): 183]
So in this Aayah, as will not be hidden to all those who are present, Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, informs the Ummah of Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و سلم), through this Aayah, that He has made Fasting obligatory upon them just as He had made its like obligatory upon the nations before us. This is a matter that is well-known to all of the Muslims who read this Aayah, and clearly understand its meaning. But what I wish to speak about is something else, a matter which very few of the general people notice - and this is the saying of Allaah, the Exalted and Most High, at the end of this Aayah:

﴿ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تَتَّقُونَ ١٨٣ ﴾

Meaning: **'...So that you may become people having Taqwaa.'**

So Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, when He commands His believing servants, or obligates them with some Legislation, (then He) usually just mentions the command, without explaining the wisdom behind it. This is because the general wisdom behind Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic[1]s, placing duties upon His servants is that He should test them by it, so that it should become apparent (as to) those who will obey Him and those who will disobey Him, the Exalted and Most High.

However in this Aayah, He mentioned something that is not found frequently in the Noble Quraan, which is that He mentioned the reason for the order to Fast, by His Saying:

﴿ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تَتَّقُونَ ١٨٣ ﴾

Meaning: **'...So that you may become people having Taqwaa.'**

So the wisdom behind the Believers' fasting is not just that they should prevent themselves from enjoyable and permissible good things, even though this is an obligation upon the fasting person - but this is not the only thing that is required and intended by this Fasting. Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, concluded His command to fast by saying:

﴿لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٨٣﴾﴾

Meaning: **'...So that you may become people having Taqwaa.'**

Meaning: that the wisdom behind the prescription of Fasting is that the Muslim should increase in obedience to Allaah, the Exalted and Most High, in the month of Fasting, and become more obedient than he was before it. Also the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) clearly stated and completely clarified this point of divine wisdom, by his (صلى الله عليه و سلم) saying, as is reported in the Saheeh of al-Bukhaaree (no. 1903), that he (صلى الله عليه و سلم) said, **"Whoever does not abandon falsehood in speech and action, then Allaah has no need that he should leave his food and drink."** Meaning: that Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, did not intend and desire, by the obligation of Fasting - which is to withhold for a stated time, well known to you all - that they should only withhold from eating and drinking. Rather they should also withhold from that which Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, has forbidden with regard to sins and acts of disobedience to Him; and from that is falsehood in speech and action.

So the Messenger (صلى الله عليه و سلم) is emphasizing the Aayah:

﴿لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٨٣﴾﴾

'...So that you may become people having *Taqwaa*.'

i.e. that you should, as an act of worship to draw you closer to Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, in addition to withholding from food and drink, also withhold from forbidden actions such as backbiting, carrying tales to cause harm to people, false witness, lying and so on, with regard to those forbidden manners that we are all aware of.

Therefore it is obligatory that all the Muslims should be aware that actions, which disrupt the Fast, are not just the physical acts, which are generally known, which are eating, drinking and sexual intercourse. The Fast is not just that you withhold from this. Therefore some of the scholars differentiate, and divide those things which disrupt the Fast into two categories, and this is what I intend by this talk of mine at this time that is blessed, if Allaah wills.

This is especially important since those who deliver Khutbahs and admonish the people during Ramadaan, when they speak about those things which disrupt the Fast, then they only speak about the material things, those things that we have just mentioned - eating, drinking and sexual intercourse. But what they should do, as sincere advisers and people who give reminder to the Muslims in general, is to concentrate a great deal upon the second category of things which disrupt the Fast. This is because the people have become used to thinking that Fasting is just to refrain from the first category, to withhold from the material things. But there is another category of things, which disrupt the Fast, which we are able to call the non-material things that disrupt the Fast.

So you have just heard his (صلى الله عليه و سلم) saying, **"Whoever does not abandon falsehood in speech and action, then Allaah has no need that he should leave his food and drink."**

Therefore every fasting person should examine himself and see: is he just withholding from the material things, or is he also withholding from those non-material things? Meaning: has he made his manners and behavior good when the blessed month of Ramadaan comes? If that is the case, then he has fulfilled the Saying of Allaah, the Exalted and Most High, at the end of the Aayah:

﴿لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ١٨٣﴾

Meaning: **'...So that you may become people having Taqwaa.'**

But as for the one who restricts himself in his fasting to just withholding from food and drink, but who continues and persists upon the evil manners which he was upon previously, before Ramadaan, then this is not the Fasting that is desired and required from the wisdom behind the legislation of this noble month, which our Lord, the Mighty and Majestic indicates in His Saying:

﴿لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ١٨٣﴾

Meaning: **'...So that you may become people having Taqwaa.'**

So therefore we advise and remind our brother Muslims that they should remember this other category of things, those that are non-material, which disrupt the Fast, and it is something which the admonishers and those who seek to direct the people to the correct way rarely speak about, not to mention the general people, who are not aware of this category of things which disrupt the fast, i.e., the non-material things.

This is what I wanted to remind our brothers who are present in this fine gathering about, if Allaah wills, so that it may be a cause for their increasing in acts of worship, seeking to draw closer to Allaah, the Exalted and Most High, in this blessed month, the month of Fasting, which is such that we hope that Allaah, the Exalted and Most High, will guide and grant us all the success of fulfilling the due right of this blessed month, which is that we withhold from both the material and the non-material things that disrupt the Fast.

Furthermore in addition to this, I hope that you will pay attention to some affairs, which have been neglected by a majority of the general Muslims, not to mention those having knowledge.

There is a hadeeth that is very often neglected due to another hadeeth, because the majority of people are unable to reconcile in practice and application between them. This hadeeth is his (صلى الله عليه و سلم) saying, **"My Ummah will continue to be upon good for as long as they hasten to break the fast and delay the pre-dawn meal."**

So here two matters were mentioned, and they are neglected by most of the people, and they are: hastening to break the fast, and delaying the pre-dawn meal (*Suhoor*).

As for neglect of the first matter, which is hastening to break the Fast, then in the view of some people it contradicts another hadeeth, which is his (صلى الله عليه و سلم) saying, **"My Ummah will continue to be upon good for as long as they hasten to pray the Maghrib Prayer."**

So here we have two commands, to hasten with two matters. So it appears to some people that we cannot hasten to perform both of them together.

But reconciling between the command to hasten with breaking the Fast and the command to hasten to pray the Maghrib Prayer is a very easy matter. So it is something that our Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) made clear to us by his action and practice. He (صلى الله عليه و سلم) used to break the Fast with three dates. He would eat three dates. Then he would pray the Maghrib Prayer, then he would eat again if he found that he needed to eat the evening meal.

But today we fall into two offences:

(i) Firstly we delay the *Adhaan* from its legislated time. Then after this delay comes another delay, which is that we sit down for a meal - except for a few people who are eager and pray the Maghrib Prayer in the mosque. But the majority of the people wait until they hear the *Adhaan*, and then they sit down to eat as if they are having a dinner, or their evening meal, and not just breaking their fast.

So the *Adhaan* these days - in most of the lands of Islaam, is, unfortunately, I have to say, and not just in Jordan, and I have known this from investigation, in most of the lands of Islaam - the *Adhaan* for Maghrib is given after the time it becomes due. And the reason for this is that we have abandoned adhering to and applying the Islamic rulings, and instead we have come to depend upon astronomical calculations. We depend upon the timetable.

But these time-tables are based upon astronomical calculations which count the land as being a single flat plane. So they give a time for this flat plane, whereas the reality is that the land, particularly in this land of ours varies, varying between the depression of valleys and the elevation of mountains. So it is not correct that a single time be given which covers the shore, the planes and the mountains. No, each part of the land has its own time. So therefore whoever is able in his place of residence, in his city or his village, to see the sun set with his own eye, then whatever time it sets at, that is the hastening that we have been commanded with in his (صلى الله عليه و سلم) saying, which we just mentioned: **'My Ummah will continue to be upon good as long as they hasten to break the fast.'** So the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) was careful to implement this Sunnah by teaching it, and by putting it into practice.

As for his teaching, then he (صلى الله عليه و سلم) said, in the hadeeth reported by al-Bukharee in his '*Saheeh*' (no. 1954), **"If the night appears from this side,"** and he pointed towards the east, **"and the day has departed from here,"** and he pointed towards the west, **"and the sun has set, then the fasting person's fast is broken"**

What does **'the fasting person's fast is broken'** mean? It means he has entered under the ruling that he should break his fast. So then comes the previous ruling where the Messenger (صلى الله عليه و سلم) encouraged hastening to break the Fast, and the Messenger (صلى الله عليه و سلم) used to implement this, even when he was riding on a journey.

So it is reported in the '*Saheeh*' of al-Bukharee (no.1955) that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) ordered one of his Companions to prepare the *Iftaar* for him. So he replied, 'O Messenger of Allaah it is still daytime before us.' Meaning: the light of the sun, so even though it had set, yet its light was still clear in the west. So the Messenger (صلى الله عليه و سلم) did not respond to what he had said, rather he re-emphasized the command to him to prepare the Iftaar. So the narrator of the hadeeth who said, We could see daylight in front of us,[1] meaning: the light of day, the light of the sun, When we broke our fast,[1] said, "If one of us had climbed onto his camel he would have seen the sun." The sun had set from here, and the Messenger (صلى الله عليه و سلم) ordered one of the Companions to prepare the *Iftaar* - Why? To hasten upon good **"My Ummah will continue upon good for as long as they hasten to break the Fast."**

So what is important is that we notice that the *Iftaar*, which is legislated to be hastened must be done with a few dates. Then we must hasten to perform the Prayer. Then after this the people can sit and eat as they need.

This is the first matter, which I wanted to remind you of, and it is how to reconcile the two things that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) commanded we should hasten to perform. The first being the command to hasten the breaking of the Fast, and the second being the command to hasten the Maghrib Prayer. So the Iftaar should be done with some dates, as occurs in the Sunnah, and if dates are not available, then with some gulps of water. Then the Prayer should be prayed in congregation in the mosque.

The other matter which I want to remind you of is what occurs in the previous hadeeth, **"And they delay the pre-dawn meal"** meaning: what is required here is the opposite to the case of the Iftaar. So he (صلى الله عليه و سلم) commanded us to hasten to perform the *Iftaar*. But as for the *Suhoor*, then it should be delayed. But what

happens today is totally contrary to this, since many people eat their *Suhoor* before the appearance of Fajr by perhaps an hour. This is not befitting. This is contrary to the Sunnah shown by the saying of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) and by his practice. So the Companions of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) used to leave the *Suhoor* so late, that one of them would almost hear the Adhaan and he would still be eating because he had delayed the *Suhoor*.

Indeed there is an authentic hadeeth reported from the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) which shows the ease afforded by Islaam, to be counted as one of the principles of Islaam, which the Muslims are proud of, especially with regard to the matter of Fasting, since Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, concluded the Aayahs concerning Fasting with His Saying:

'Allaah desires ease for you, and He does not desire to make things difficult for you.

So from this ease is his (صلى الله عليه و سلم) saying, **"If one of you hears the call to Prayer and the vessel is in the hand of one of you, then let him not put it down until he fulfils his need from it."**

" If one of you hears the call to Prayer and the vessel" the vessel containing food, whether it be milk, some drink, water, anything which a person may take as *Suhoor*, and he hears the *Adhaan*, then he should not say, Now the food is forbidden due to the *Adhaan* being heard. The person who has had enough, it is not allowed for him to then have any more, whether it be a drink, or some fruit, when he has had his fill of whatever he was eating.

But as for the one who hears the *Adhaan* and he has not yet taken what he needs from the food and the drink, then the Messenger (صلى الله عليه و سلم) made that lawful for him. So he clearly said, in the clear and eloquent Arabic language, **"If one of you hears the call to Prayer, and the vessel is in his hand, then let him not put it down until he fulfils his need from it."**

And what is meant here by the call is the second call, the second *Adhaan*. It is not the first Adhaan, which they wrongly call the *Adhaan* of *Imsaak* (i.e. withholding). We must know that there is no basis for calling the first *Adhaan* the *Adhaan* for withholding (*imsaak*).

The second *Adhaan* is when we are to withhold, and this is clearly stated in the Quraan, since Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, says:

'And eat and drink until the white thread of dawn becomes clear to you from the black thread of the night.'

So eating becomes forbidden at the start of the time of the Fajr Prayer. There is no separation between these two things. There is no withholding from food and drink for a quarter of an hour, or less than that, or more than that, before the start of the time for the Fajr Prayer. Not at all.

Because the Prayer becomes due when the true dawn appears, and food becomes forbidden for the fasting person when the true dawn appears. So there is no separation between these two matters at all.

So therefore there occurs in the hadeeth agreed upon by al-Bukharee and Muslim, from the hadeeth of ʿAbdullaah Ibn ʿUmar Ibn al-Khattaab -*radiyallaahu `anhu*, that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) said, **"Let not the Adhaan of Bilaal deceive you..."** meaning, the first *Adhaan*, **"...because he gives the Adhaan in order to awaken the person who is sleeping, and so that the person who wishes to eat the pre-dawn meal can do so. So eat and drink until Ibn Umm Maktoon gives the *Adhaan*."**

Ibn Umm Maktoon, whose name was 'Amr, was a blind man, and he was the one about whom the Saying of Allaah, the Exalted and Most High, came down:

'He frowned and turned away, that a blind man had come to him' to the end of the Aayaat.

So he used to give the second *Adhaan*, the *Adhaan* which means that eating becomes prohibited and that it is now time for the Fajr Prayer.
How did he used to give the *Adhaan* when he was blind? This is a question, which naturally occurs to some people. 'Amr Ibn Umm Maktoom used to climb on the roof of the mosque, but he could not see the dawn, so he would wait until someone passing by saw the dawn. So when someone saw that the dawn had appeared and spread across the horizon, they would say to him, **It is morning. It is morning.** Then he would give the *Adhaan*.

So you will notice here that the *Adhaan* of 'Amr ibn Umm Maktoom was after the Fajr had appeared, and had been seen by the people whilst they were walking in the streets. So when it was said to him, **"It is morning. It is morning,"** he would give the *Adhaan*.

So therefore there is latitude in the affair, since the *muadhdhin* would be delayed in giving the Adhaan until he heard the people telling him, "It is morning, it is morning." And then Allaah¹s Messenger (صلى الله عليه و سلم) said:
"If one of you hears the call to Prayer and the vessel is in his hand, then let him not put it down until he has fulfilled his need from it."

So Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, spoke truly when He said at the end of those Aayahs related to Fasting:

'Allaah desires to make things easy for you, and He does not desire to make things difficult for you.'

and **'...that you should complete the number of days, and that you should glorify Allaah by mentioning *takbeer* for His having guided you, and that you should be thankful. '**

So therefore from the Fiqh that is to be criticized, and which runs contrary to this Sunnah, is that a person says, "If someone hears the *Adhaan* and has some food in his mouth, then he must spit it out." So this is over strictness, and (*ghuluww*) exceeding the limits in the Religion, and the Lord of all of the creation admonished us, and reminded us, in His Book and in the Sunnah of His Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) that we should not exceed the due limits in our Religion. So He said, in the Noble Qur·aan:

﴿يَٰٓأَهۡلَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ لَا تَغۡلُواْ فِي دِينِكُمۡ وَلَا تَقُولُواْ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ إِلَّا ٱلۡحَقَّۚ﴾

Meaning: 'O People of the Book! Do not exceed the limits in your religion, and do not say anything about Allaah except the truth.'

And our Messenger (صلى الله عليه و سلم) said to us, or he (صلى الله عليه و سلم) said, **"Beware of (*ghuluww*) exceeding the limits in the Religion. Because those who came before you were destroyed by their exceeding the limits in their Religion."**

So Allaah¹s Messenger (صلى الله عليه و سلم) has made it clear to us that there is latitude and a margin of ease in the matter of a person's taking *suhoor*, to the extent that he said: **"If one of you hears the call to Prayer whilst the vessel is in his hand, then let him not put it down until he has completed his need from it."**

So it is opposition to Allaah and to the Messenger that a person says that one who hears the *Adhaan* whilst he has food in his mouth must spit it out onto the ground. This is not from the Sunnah. Rather this is contrary to the Sunnah, and is contrary to the clear command of the Messenger (صلى الله عليه و سلم).

And I have been asked many times, so I will not leave open the need for such a question, but rather I will precede you in (answering) it, by stating that this hadeeth is to be found in some of the most famous books of the Sunnah. From them being the Sunan of Aboo Daawood, and it is the third book from the well-known six books. The first of which is Saheehul-Bukhaaree, the second being Saheeh Muslim, and the third being the Sunan of Aboo Daawood.

This hadeeth is to be found in it, and it is likewise reported by Aboo 'Abdillaah al-Haakim in his *Mustadrak*, and it is likewise reported by the Imaam of the Sunnah, Imaam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, *rahimahullaah*, in his tremendous book known as the Musnad of Imaam Ahmad.

So the hadeth is not a strange hadeeth, rather it is a well-known hadeeth, and was reported by the Imaams of the Sunnah in the early times, and with an authentic chain of narration.

So here I say, to conclude this talk, since perhaps some of you have questions, which we will answer if Allaah wills, so I will conclude it with his (صلى الله عليه و سلم) saying **"Allaah loves that His allowances be acted upon just as He loves that His prescribed duties be carried out,"** and in one narration, **"Just as He hates that disobedience to Him be committed."**

So there are two narrations, **"Allaah loves that His allowances be acted upon just as He loves that His prescribed duties be carried out"**, and the second narration is, **" as He hates that disobedience to Him be committed."**

So therefore the Muslim should not practice false piety, and (as a result) refrain from obeying the Prophet ﷺ in that which he encouraged us upon and clarified to us.

And what has been said is sufficient, and all praise is for Allaah, the Lord of all of the creation."

[Translated by Abu Talhah Dawud Burbank]